

Message Text

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12

ACTION AF-06

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R 261512Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4982

INFO AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE CAPE TOWN 0198

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SF, PINT

SUBJ: SAG AGREES TO BOPHUTHATSWANA INDEPENDENCE

REF: 75 PRETORIA 4294, 75 PRETORIA 4667

1. PRIME MINISTER VORSTER, MINISTER OF BANTU ADMINISTRATION
M.C. BOTHA AND OTHER SAG OFFICIALS MET WITH BOPHUTHATSWANA
CHIEF MINISTER LUCAS MANGOPE AND HIS CABINET IN CAPE TOWN
FEB 24. STATEMENT ISSUED BY SAG AFTER MEETING NOTES THAT
IT IS "POLICY OF GOVERNMENT TO GRANT INDEPENDENCE TO THE
HOMELANDS WHO ASK FOR IT". THEREFORE, A WORKING COMMITTEE,
CONSISTING OF REPS OF SAF AND BOPHUTHATSWANA GOVERNMENTS,
WILL BE APPOINTED TO WORK OUT DETAILS FOR, AND TO DETERMINE
DATE OF, BOPHUTHATSWANA INDEPENDENCE, "WHICH WILL BE AS
SOON AS POSSIBLE". BOPHUTHATSWANA CABINET WILL DRAFT NEW
CONSTITUTION AND SAG WILL INTRODUCE LEGISLATION EARLY IN
1977 TO ENABLE BOPHUTHATSWANA TO BECOME INDEPENDENT. A
NEW CAPITAL FOR THE HOMELAND WILL BE BUILT NEAR WELBEDACHT.

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WM COMMENT: MEETING SERVED AS OFFICIAL CONFIRMATION OF

MANGOPE'S INTENTION TO SEEK INDEPENDENCE WHICH HE FIRST ANNOUNCED IN NOVEMBER (REFTELS). MANGOPE HAS RECENTLY MADE SEVERAL PUBLIC STATEMENTS HARSHLY CRITICAL OF SAG POLICIES, ESPECIALLY ITS ADHERENCE TO TERMS OF 1936 LAND ACT WHICH LIMITS AMOUNT OF LAND TO BE GIVEN TO "BANTUSTANS". ON JAN 28 HE TOLD UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN AUDIENCE THAT "IF THE CONSOLIDATION QUESTION WAS TO BE SEALED AND FINALIZED IN THE PRESENT STAGE, WE WOULD NOT CONSIDER INDEPENDENCE AT ALL". HOWEVER, OFFICIAL IN MINISTRY OF BANTU AFFAIRS TOLD EMBOFF FEB 26 THAT FEB 24 MANGOPE-VORSTER MEETING HAD BEEN EXTREMELY CORDIAL AND THAT NEITHER SIDE HAD SET OUT ANY PRECONDITIONS FOR INDEPENDENCE.

3. AS EMBASSY HAS POINTED OUT PREVIOUSLY, MANGOPE PLAYS HIS CARDS VERY CLOSE TO CHEST. IT IS DIFFICULT TO SPECULATE UPON HIS MOTIVES, GOALS OR TACTICS. CHARITABLY SPEAKING, IT MAY BE THAT HE TRULY BELIEVES THAT AS INDEPENDENT NATION BOPHUTHATSWANA WILL HAVE MORE CHIPS TO USE IN ITS BARGAINING WITH SAG. PERHAPS HE ALSO FEELS THAT BY ENTERING INTO FORMAL NEGOTIATIONS ON INDEPENDENCE HIS ABILITY TO "EMBARRASS" SAG IF HIS DEMANDS ARE NOT MET WILL INCREASE COMMENSURATELY. MANY KNOWLEDGEABLE OBSERVERS ARE, HOWEVER, QUITE CYNICAL. IN CONVERSATION WITH CHARGE' AND CONGEN FEB 27 CISKEI CHIEF MINISTER LENNOX SEBE SAID THAT MANGOPE IS MOTIVATED BY DESIRE TO MAINTAIN POLITICAL POWER IN FACE OF GROWING OPPOSITION AND THAT HE IS USING NEW AND ATTRACTIVE CONCEPT OF INDEPENDENCE WHICH FEW OF HIS PEOPLE TRULY UNDERSTAND TO FOMENT SUPPORT. HE ALSO SAID THAT NEW BOPHUTHATSWANA CAPITAL TO BE BUILT IN MANGOPE'S HOME DISTRICT IS LITTLE MORE THAN A "BRIBE".

EDMONDSON

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